WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   An electronic commerce distributed network, comprising:

a plurality of interconnected processing nodes;

each processing node comprising a first sub-node and a second sub-node, where the first and second sub-nodes of each processing node are connected to communicate information and are in geographically remote locations;

the first sub-node of each processing node having:

an active state in which the first sub-node communicates with other processing nodes and processes electronic commerce messages communicated with originator/recipient organizations; and

the second sub-node of each processing node having:

a mirror state in which the second sub-node mirrors the first sub-node; and

an active state in which the second sub-node communicates with other processing nodes and processes electronic commerce messages communicated with originator/recipient organizations;

the first sub-node of each processing node initially in the active state and the second sub-node initially in the mirror state, and the second sub-node operable to switch to the active state if the first sub-node fails;

such that each processing node in the electronic
commerce distributed network can maintain operation in
the event the first sub-node experiences failure.

5   2.   The network of Claim 1, wherein the processing
of electronic commerce messages by each first sub-node
and second sub-node when in the active state comprises:
        receiving electronic commerce messages from
originator organizations;
10   processing the electronic commerce messages to build
outgoing electronic commerce messages; and
        communicating the outgoing electronic commerce
messages to recipient organizations.

15   3.   The network of Claim 1, wherein the first sub-
node of each processing node further has a mirror state
in which the first sub-node mirrors the second sub-node;
        the first sub-node in the mirror state when the
second sub-node is in the active state, and the first
20   sub-node operable to switch to the active state if the
second sub-node fails;
        such that each processing node in the electronic
commerce distributed network can maintain operation in
the event either the first sub-node or the second sub-
25   node experiences failure.

        4.   The network of Claim 3, wherein the first and
second sub-nodes of each processing node each comprise:
        a processing engine;

a regional server; and

a regional mirror server;

wherein the processing engine and the regional
mirror server are operated when in the active state and
the regional mirror server is operated when in the mirror
state.

5.   The network of Claim 1, wherein each processing
node provides processing of electronic commerce messages
for participating organizations within a regional area of
the processing node.

6.   The network of Claim 1, wherein the first sub-
node and the second sub-node of at least one of the
processing nodes are in geographically locations
comprising different cities.

7.   A processing node for an electronic commerce
distributed network, comprising:

a first sub-node; and

a second sub-node, the first and second sub-nodes
5   connected to communicate information and in
geographically remote locations;

the first sub-node having:

an active state in which the first sub-node
communicates with other processing nodes and processes
10   electronic commerce messages communicated with
originator/recipient organizations; and

the second sub-node having:

a mirror state in which the second sub-node
mirrors the first sub-node; and

15   an active state in which the second sub-node
communicates with other processing nodes and processes
electronic commerce messages communicated with
originator/recipient organizations;

the first sub-node initially in the active state and
20   the second sub-node initially in the mirror state, and
the second sub-node operable to switch to the active
state if the first sub-node fails;

such that the processing node can maintain operation
in the event the first sub-node experiences failure

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8.   The processing node of Claim 7, wherein the
processing of electronic commerce messages by the first
sub-node and the second sub-node when in the active state
comprises:

     receiving electronic commerce messages from
originator organizations;

     processing the electronic commerce messages to build
outgoing electronic commerce messages; and

5   communicating the outgoing electronic commerce
messages to recipient organizations.

9.   A processing engine for a processing node of an
electronic commerce distributed network, the processing
engine comprising:

a plurality of communication units operable to
5   communicate with participating organizations in a
plurality of communication protocols, the plurality of
communication units further operable to receive
electronic commerce messages from originator
organizations and communicate electronic commerce
10   messages to recipient organizations;

an engine operable to process an electronic commerce
message received from an originator organization and to
build an outgoing electronic commerce message for
transmission to a recipient organization, wherein the
15   engine accomplishes processing and building by:

accessing profiles that defines characteristics
for the originator organization and the recipient
organization; and

invoking selected functions from a matrix of
20   functions where the selected functions are chosen based
upon the profiles for the originator organization and the
recipient organization; and

an interface unit coupled to and communicating with
the plurality of communication units and the engine, the
25   interface unit allowing incoming and outgoing electronic
commerce messages to be communicated between the
plurality of communication units and the engine;

the processing engine providing electronic commerce
interconnectivity for participating organizations that
have different computer and communication environments.

5   10.   The processing engine of Claim 9, wherein the
interface unit is an X.400 unit operable to communicate
using an X.400 protocol.

        11.   The processing engine of Claim 10, wherein the
10   plurality of communication units comprise a P1 unit and a
P7 unit.

        12.   The processing engine of Claim 9, wherein the
plurality of communication units includes a plurality of
15   Internet mail units, and the processing engine further
comprising a gateway coupled to the plurality of mail
units and the engine, the gateway operable to interface
between a communication protocol of the plurality of
internet mail units and a communication protocol of the
20   interface unit.

        13.   The processing engine of Claim 12, wherein the
plurality of mail units comprise an SMTP unit, a MIME
unit and a POP unit.

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        14.   The processing engine of Claim 9, wherein the
profiles of the originator organization and the recipient
organization are accessible via an external user
interface.

15.   A method of operation for an electronic
commerce distributed network, comprising:

forming a processing node having a first sub-node
and a second sub-node in geographically remote locations,
the first and second sub-nodes connected to communicate
information;

operating the first sub-node in an active state to
communicate with other processing nodes and to process
electronic commerce messages communicated with
originator/recipient organizations;

operating the second sub-node in a mirror state to
mirror the first sub-node while the first sub-node is
operated in the active state; and

switching the second sub-node, if the first sub-node
fails, to operate in an active state to communicate with
other processing nodes and to process electronic commerce
messages communicated with originator/recipient
organizations;

such that operation of the electronic commerce
distributed network is maintained in the event the first
sub-node experiences failure.

16.   The method of Claim 15, wherein operating to
process electronic commerce messages when in the active
state comprises:

receiving electronic commerce messages from
originator organizations;

processing the electronic commerce messages to build
outgoing electronic commerce messages; and

communicating the outgoing electronic commerce
messages to recipient organizations.

17. The method of Claim 15, further comprising:

operating the first sub-node in a mirror state to
mirror the second sub-node while the second sub-node is
operated in the active state; and

switching the first sub-node, if the second sub-node
fails, to operate in the active state to communicate with
other processing nodes and to process electronic commerce
messages communicated with originator/recipient
organizations;

such that operation of the electronic commerce
distributed network is maintained in the event either the
first sub-node or the second sub-node experiences
failure.

18. The method of Claim 17, wherein operating the
first and second sub-nodes is accomplished using:

a processing engine;

a regional server; and

a regional mirror server;

wherein the processing engine and the regional
mirror server are operated when in the active state and
the regional mirror server is operated when in the mirror
state.

19. The method of Claim 15, wherein operating to
process electronic commerce messages comprising

processing electronic commerce messages for participating

organizations within a regional area of each processing

node.

5   20.   The method of Claim 15, wherein the first sub-

node and the second sub-node are in geographically

locations comprising different cities.